

STRATHFIELD COUNCIL

# EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

## MINUTES

**Tuesday 28 February 2023**

6:30pm

Council Chambers

65 Homebush Road, Strathfield



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Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting of Strathfield Municipal Council held on 28 February 2023, in the Council Chambers, 65 Homebush Road, Strathfield.

**COMMENCING:** 6:30pm

**PRESENT:** Councillor Matthew Blackmore  
Councillor Karen Pensabene  
Councillor Benjamin Cai  
Councillor Raj Datta  
Councillor Sandy Reddy

**STAFF:** Michael Mamo, General Manager  
Kristy Watts, Director Corporate and Community  
Clare Harley, Director Planning and Environment  
Cathy Edwards-Davis, Director Engineering and Operations  
Don Johnston, Chief Financial Officer  
David McQuade, Senior Governance Officer

**1. PRAYER:**

The Prayer was read.

**2. RECOGNITION OF TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS**

The Recognition of Traditional Custodians was read.

**3. APOLOGIES**

Councillor Maheswaran and Councillor Hall.

**4. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST (NATURE OF INTEREST TO BE DISCLOSED)**

Nil.

## 5. OPEN FORUM

Mr Tommy Chen, representative of the Homebush Residents' Group addressed Council to speak against the recommendation for Item CCS1 Proposed Special Rate Variation and Rating Structure Changes.

## 6. REPORTS TO COUNCIL

### CCS1 Proposed Special Rate Variation and Rating Structure Changes

44/23

**RESOLVED:** (Blackmore / Pensabene)

That Council:

- 1) Receive and note the contents of the Special Rate Variation Community Feedback Report, which outlines the feedback received from community consultation on the proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV), creation of new rating sub-categories and creation of minimum rates.
- 2) Adopt a new rating structure to commence from 1 July 2023, which will include the current existing categories and sub-categories of ordinary rates and special rates, and, in addition, will:
  - a) Include the creation of the following new business ordinary rate subcategories:
    - i) A new business rate subcategory called *Business – Business Strathfield Town Centre*, which applies to all business rated properties within the Strathfield Town Centre as shown in Figure 3 of this report.
    - ii) A new business rate subcategory called *Business – Business North*, which applies to all business rated properties within the areas labelled Business North as shown in Figure 4 of this report.
    - iii) A new business rate subcategory called *Business – Business South*, which applies to all business rated properties within the areas labelled Business South as shown in Figure 4 of this report.
  - b) The removal of the base amount applied to the business and residential ordinary rate categories, and;
  - c) The establishment of a minimum amount, in accordance with Section 548 of the Local Government Act 1993, to apply to the ad-valorem amount of all business and residential rate categories and subcategories. The amount set for the minimum amount will be subject to an application to IPART, as detailed below.
- 3) Approve the transfer of domestic waste revenue to residential ordinary rates, subject to IPART SRV approval for a 20.3% permanent increase in ordinary rates from 1 Jul 2023 (This increase is included in the 2023/24 SRV increases detailed below).
- 4) Make an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a permanent Special Rate Variation (SRV), under Section 508A of the Local Government Act 1993 commencing on 1 July 2023.

The SRV would permanently increase total ordinary rates over four years and remain in perpetuity, as follows:

- a) A 35.1% increase for the 2023-24 financial year (inclusive of the 3.7% rate peg determined by IPART for the year). This includes the 20.3% increase as a result of transferring revenue from domestic waste to ordinary residential rates outlined in the recommendation above.
  - b) A 13.0% increase for the 2024-25 financial year (inclusive of the forecast rate peg of 3.0% for that year)
  - c) A 17.5% increase for the 2025-26 financial year (inclusive of the forecast rate peg of 2.5% for that year)
  - d) A 7.5% increase for the 2026-27 financial year (inclusive of the forecast rate peg of 2.5% for that year)
- 5) Make an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to set its minimum rates in accordance Section 548(3) of the Local Government Act 1993, for all rating categories and sub-categories, as follows.
    - a) \$1,040.00 for the 2023-24 financial year
    - b) \$1,200.00 for the 2024-25 financial year
  - 6) The Minimum Rate will be increased by rate peg from 2025/26.
  - 7) Adopt the exhibited updated 2022-33 Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) with a subsequent update to reflect the changes outlined above to the SRV amounts over four years and the minimum rate increases over two years.
  - 8) Endorse that the necessary adjustments be made to the SRV related items in the Council adopted 2022-2023 Operational Plan and 2022-2026 Delivery Program in accordance with the above resolutions.
  - 9) Endorse the 2022-2026 Workforce Management plan which is to be submitted with Council's IPART application.
  - 10) That Council be provided with a further review of the Financial Hardship Policy.

For the Motion: Councillors Blackmore, Pensabene, Datta and Reddy

Against the Motion: Councillor Cai

## **CCS2 Quarterly Budget Review Statement as at 31 December 2022**

45/23

**RESOLVED:** (Pensabene / Reddy)

The Budget Review Statement for quarter ending 31 December 2022 be received and adopted.

For the Motion: Councillors Blackmore, Pensabene, Cai, Datta and Reddy

Against the Motion: Nil

### **CCS3 Strathfield Connector Bus Review Report**

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The report on the consultation about the Strathfield Connect Bus Service be received and noted.
2. That Council considers the following options concerning the operation of the Connector Bus Service.
  - a. Option 1 - That the operation of the Strathfield Connector Bus Service ceases as soon as practical, allowing for the finalisation of staffing matters and public notification of the decision.
  - b. Option 2 :
    - i. That a report coming back to Council presenting options for a reduced Connector Bus Service including ceasing weekend services.
    - ii. That the current Connector Bus Service continue while the above report is being prepared with the cessation of the weekend service to occur as soon as practical.
    - iii. That \$50,000 is allocated in the next quarterly budget review for the engagement of a suitably qualified consultant to analyse and prepare the report identified above having regard for local community transport needs.
    - iv. That Council advocate to the NSW Government to improve available and accessible transport in the Homebush West area.
    - v. That Council advocate for Transport NSW to expand the catchment of on-demand bus services e.g. BRIDJ, to cover the Strathfield LGA.

#### **MOTION: (Blackmore / Reddy)**

1. The report on the consultation about the Strathfield Connect Bus Service be received and noted.
2. That a report come back to Council presenting options for a reduced Connector Bus Service including ceasing weekend services.
3. That the current Connector Bus Service continue while the above report is being prepared with the cessation of the weekend service to occur as soon as practical.
4. That \$50,000 is allocated in the next quarterly budget review for the engagement of a suitably qualified consultant to analyse and prepare the report identified above having regard for local community transport needs.
5. That Council advocate to the NSW Government to improve available and accessible transport in the Homebush West area.

6. That Council advocate for Transport NSW to expand the catchment of on-demand bus services e.g. BRIDJ, to cover the Strathfield LGA.
7. That any communication in relation to items 5 and 6 be sent to the Office of the State Member for Strathfield.

**FORESHADOWED MOTION: (Datta)**

1. The report on the consultation about the Strathfield Connect Bus Service be received and noted.
2. That a report come back to Council presenting options for a reduced Connector Bus Service including ceasing weekend services as deemed necessary depending on the area of the LGA.
3. That the current Connector Bus Service continue while the above report is being prepared.
4. That \$50,000 is allocated in the next quarterly budget review for the engagement of a suitably qualified consultant to analyse and prepare the report identified above having regard for local community transport needs.
5. That Council advocate to the NSW Government to improve available and accessible transport in the Homebush West area.
6. That Council advocate for Transport NSW to expand the catchment of on-demand bus services e.g. BRIDJ, to cover the Strathfield LGA.
7. That any communication in relation to items 5 and 6 be sent to the Office of the State Member for Strathfield.

The Motion was put.

**46/23**

**RESOLVED: (Blackmore / Reddy)**

1. The report on the consultation about the Strathfield Connect Bus Service be received and noted.
2. That a report come back to Council presenting options for a reduced Connector Bus Service including ceasing weekend services.
3. That the current Connector Bus Service continue while the above report is being prepared with the cessation of the weekend service to occur as soon as practical.

4. That \$50,000 is allocated in the next quarterly budget review for the engagement of a suitably qualified consultant to analyse and prepare the report identified above having regard for local community transport needs.
5. That Council advocate to the NSW Government to improve available and accessible transport in the Homebush West area.
6. That Council advocate for Transport NSW to expand the catchment of on-demand bus services e.g. BRIDJ, to cover the Strathfield LGA.
7. That any communication in relation to items 5 and 6 be sent to the Office of the State Member for Strathfield.

For the Motion: Councillors Blackmore, Pensabene and Reddy

Against the Motion: Councillors Cai and Datta

#### **PE1 Managing Council-Related Development Policy - Conflicts of Interest**

**47/23**

**RESOLVED:** (Pensabene / Blackmore)

1. That Council resolves to exhibit the draft Managing Council-Related Development Policy (the Policy) and the amended Community Participation Plan (CPP).
2. That Council resolves to adopt both the Policy and the amended CPP in the event of no submissions received by Council during the exhibition period.
3. In the event of any submissions received during the exhibition period, that these submissions be reported back to Council advising the outcome of the exhibition.

For the Motion: Councillors Blackmore, Pensabene, Cai, Datta and Reddy

Against the Motion: Nil

#### **7. MATTERS OF URGENCY IN ACCORDANCE WITH CLAUSE 241 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT GENERAL REGULATION, 2021**

**Matter of Urgency - Councillor Karen Pensabene, Councillor Sandy Reddy and Councillor Matthew Blackmore**

Councillors Pensabene, Reddy and Blackmore moved a matter of urgency on the grounds that Council must

lodge the Special Rate Variation application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal by 3 March 2023.

The Chair, Councillor Blackmore ruled under clause 9.3 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice that the matter is of great urgency on the grounds that it requires a decision by the Council before the next scheduled Ordinary Meeting of Council.

The Rescission Motion was put.

## **7.1 Rescission Motion – Item CCS1 Proposed Special Rate Variation and Rating Structure Changes**

**MOTION:** (Blackmore / Pensabene)

That the resolution for item CCS1 Proposed Special Rate Variation and Rating Structure Changes below be rescinded:

*"48/23*

*RESOLVED: (Blackmore / Pensabene)*

*That Council:*

- 1) Receive and note the contents of the Special Rate Variation Community Feedback Report, which outlines the feedback received from community consultation on the proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV), creation of new rating sub-categories and creation of minimum rates.*
- 2) Adopt a new rating structure to commence from 1 July 2023, which will include the current existing categories and sub-categories of ordinary rates and special rates, and, in addition, will:*
  - a) Include the creation of the following new business ordinary rate subcategories:*
    - i) A new business rate subcategory called Business – Business Strathfield Town Centre, which applies to all business rated properties within the Strathfield Town Centre as shown in Figure 3 of this report.*
    - ii) A new business rate subcategory called Business – Business North, which applies to all business rated properties within the areas labelled Business North as shown in Figure 4 of this report.*
    - iii) A new business rate subcategory called Business – Business South, which applies to all business rated properties within the areas labelled Business South as shown in Figure 4 of this report.*
  - b) The removal of the base amount applied to the business and residential ordinary rate categories, and;*
  - c) The establishment of a minimum amount, in accordance with Section 548 of the Local Government Act 1993, to apply to the ad-valorem amount of all business and residential rate*



*categories and subcategories. The amount set for the minimum amount will be subject to an application to IPART, as detailed below.*

- 3) Approve the transfer of domestic waste revenue to residential ordinary rates, subject to IPART SRV approval for a 20.3% permanent increase in ordinary rates from 1 Jul 2023 (This increase is included in the 2023/24 SRV increases detailed below.*
- 4) Make an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a permanent Special Rate Variation (SRV), under Section 508A of the Local Government Act 1993 commencing on 1 July 2023. The SRV would permanently increase total ordinary rates over four years and remain in perpetuity, as follows:*
  - a) A 35.1% increase for the 2023-24 financial year (inclusive of the 3.7% rate peg determined by IPART for the year). This includes the 20.3% increase as a result of transferring revenue from domestic waste to ordinary residential rates outlined in the recommendation above.*
  - b) A 13.0% increase for the 2024-25 financial year (inclusive of the forecast rate peg of 3.0% for that year)*
  - c) A 17.5% increase for the 2025-26 financial year (inclusive of the forecast rate peg of 2.5% for that year)*
  - d) A 7.5% increase for the 2026-27 financial year (inclusive of the forecast rate peg of 2.5% for that year)*
- 5) Make an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to set its minimum rates in accordance Section 548(3) of the Local Government Act 1993, for all rating categories and sub-categories, as follows.*
  - a) \$1,040.00 for the 2023-24 financial year*
  - b) \$1,200.00 for the 2024-25 financial year*
- 6) The Minimum Rate will be increased by rate peg from 2025/26.*
- 7) Adopt the exhibited updated 2022-33 Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) with a subsequent update to reflect the changes outlined above to the SRV amounts over four years and the minimum rate increases over two years.*
- 8) Endorse that the necessary adjustments be made to the SRV related items in the Council adopted 2022-2023 Operational Plan and 2022-2026 Delivery Program in accordance with the above resolutions.*
- 9) Endorse the 2022-2026 Workforce Management plan which is to be submitted with Council's IPART application.*
- 10) That Council be provided with a further review of the Financial Hardship Policy."*

The Rescission Motion was put.

For the Motion: Councillors Cai and Datta


Against the Motion: Councillors Blackmore, Pensabene and Reddy

The Mayor declared the Rescission Motion **Lost**.

## 8. CLOSE

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7:06pm.

The foregoing Minutes were confirmed at the meeting of the Council of the Municipality of Strathfield on 7 March 2023.

Chairman  General Manager 